

THE TALKING BIRD

PURNELL
AND
WEATHERWAX



Merry Christmas - 1947
with Love from
Aunt Dorothy -

THE TALKING BIRD



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**THE TALKING
BIRD** An Aztec Story
Book: Tales told to Little
Paco by his Grandfather.
By IDELLA PURNELL and
JOHN M. WEATHERWAX.

Illustrated by
Frances Purnell Dehlsen

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To
"THE CHIPMUNK"
FRANCES-LEE DEHLSSEN
AND
HER GRANDFATHER
GEORGE EDWARD PURNELL

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THE TALKING BIRD



GRANDFATHER JUAN AND LITTLE PACO

In the sixteenth century, the Aztecs were the strongest of the Indian tribes in Mexico. Then the Spanish came across the sea. These powerful Indians had never seen either horses or cannon. They were frightened so badly that the Spaniards were able to take the country away from them.

Nowadays many of the people who live in Mexico are part Indian and part Spanish, and they are called Mexicans. Some of them still talk the Indian languages, but most of the people speak Spanish.

In Mexico there is a city called Guadalajara. This is a long name,

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but it sounds very lovely when you pronounce the *j* as an *h*, as you should. That is where Little Paco lived.

Little Paco's house was made of big bricks. They were the color of mud and were made of sun-baked clay. Little Paco's father and mother and his three brothers and three sisters lived there, too, as well as his dear, dear grandfather.

Every day when the sun rose he hurried as fast as he could to shine on Little Paco's *patio*. The *patio* was a little like a garden, and a little like a yard, and it was right in the center of the house. We would think it a funny yard, because there were no trees in it, and no grass.

In the *patio* there were chickens and a rooster and a little dog named Chuchu (choo-choo). Little Paco had also a cat named Tonch and two canaries. The canaries hopped about in their little straw cages and sang all day long. There were four big flowerpots in the *patio*: they held a red geranium, a yellow rose, a purple petunia, and a pink carnation.

Little Paco and the morning sun both thought the *patio* one of the nicest little yards in all Mexico, because the flowers in the four flowerpots always looked so gay, and because Chuchu and Tonch and the rooster and the chickens were always so happy there. Besides, it was always in the *patio* that Grandfather Juan sat while he mended shoes and told stories to his dear Little Paco.

Grandfather Juan and Little Paco's father were shoemakers. Little Paco loved to smell of the great big hides in his father's shop. He loved

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to watch his father make new shoes, and he loved to watch his grandfather mend old shoes. Little Paco wanted to help, but he was still too little to do very much. He could go on errands, though, and help build the fire for dinner, and run to fetch things for his dear father and his Grandfather Juan. When there wasn't anything more to do, he would sit down near his grandfather at the edge of the *patio*, and beg Grandfather Juan to tell stories of long ago, stories of the Aztecs of Old Mexico.

Now you will hear more about what Little Paco did every day, and you will hear the same wonderful stories that his Grandfather Juan told to Little Paco.



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Little Paco had gone to the market with his mother.

He loved to walk up and down the aisles among the stands of the sellers of fruits and of vegetables and of meats and of candies. He liked to see the yellow carrots and the green peppers and lettuces, the glistening white onions, the big pumpkins, and the pearly white ears of corn. He liked to look at the little sausages hanging in festoons, and at the great sheets of fried yellow pigskin, that has such a rich, crunchy taste. He liked to see the rows on top of rows of oranges, the watermelons, the coconuts and the *papayas*. Most of all he liked to visit the stalls of the sellers of candy, for often his mother would let him have a penny

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with which to buy coconut candy, or cactus candy, or milk candy in little tan-colored bars.

In the middle of the market building there was a fountain around which the flower women sat. Little Paco always went to see their big baskets of roses and sunflowers and cosmos and magnolias, and their trays of gardenias and camelias.

In the door of the market sat women with big flat bowls of good things to eat: round white cheeses; green cactus leaves cut up and cooked with onions and herbs; and *tacos*, made of flat corn cakes wrapped around chicken or pork meat.

Little Paco always wanted to buy a *taco*, but his mother didn't like him to eat *tacos* unless they were made at home.

"No, no," she would say. "Wait until noon, and I shall make you the most delicious of *tacos*. They will have lots of cheese and meat in them, and a great deal of chile sauce!"

You see, in Mexico little boys and girls do not have the kind of sandwiches that we have. They have *tortillas*, made of corn meal. The *tortillas* are soft and flat and round, like the thinnest of white pancakes; when they are wrapped around meat or cheese they are ever so good! So, instead of sandwiches, they make *tacos* by rolling up any kind of filling in their *tortillas*, just as we put any filling we like between two slices of bread when we are making sandwiches. They are good hot. They are good cold.

But Little Paco was very hungry, for he had had nothing to eat

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since breakfast! So his mother kept telling him that very soon they would go home, and she would make some nice *tacos* for him.

Just as they were about to leave the market, they stopped at the stall of the bird man.

The bird man had two little trained finches. He opened their cage and called them by name. And out they hopped! Then he said to one little bird, "Spank the baby!" as he gave it a tiny celluloid doll. The little bird hopped up to it and spanked it with his sharp beak. Then the bird man said to the other little bird, "Ring the bell!" as he gave it a tiny brass bell. The little bird hopped up to the bell, caught the top of it in his beak, and rang it. "Kiss each other!" said the bird man. And the two little birds caught their beaks together in a long kiss. Then, "Tell the little boy's fortune!" he said, and held out a box filled with tiny folded papers, pink, blue, green, and yellow. One of the birds hopped up to the box and picked out a folded pink paper and gave it to Little Paco.

"Oh, Mother!" cried Little Paco. "Read it quick! What does it say?"

His mother unfolded the little paper.

"If you are always a good boy, you will have a happy and useful life," she read. She thanked the bird man for making the two little finches perform, and gave him five pennies.

"Wait a minute!" said the bird man. "I have a fine parrot here, just right for a little boy like yours!"

So little Paco and his mother waited to see the parrot. Sure enough,

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it was a fine parrot, and how it could talk! Little Paco forgot all about being hungry, he was so excited. They decided to get the parrot, but they weren't able to pay for it that day. However, the very next day they went to market, and Little Paco's mother gave the bird man some money a lady had paid for shoes that Little Paco's father had made. Then the bird man gave Paco the parrot, in a cage made of yellow bamboo reeds, with a little sliding door. Little Paco's mother carried the market basket home herself, so that her son could carry his very own parrot.

Grandfather Juan clapped his hands when he saw the parrot.

"What a fine bird your Perico (peh-ree-koh) is!" he said. "He is quite as fine as the Parrot That Flew Down From a Tree in the beginning of things."

"Oh, Grandfather!" cried Little Paco. "Will you tell me about him? The Parrot That Flew Down From a Tree in the beginning of things! Was he like *my* Perico, Grandfather?"

"Enough like him to be a brother," said Grandfather Juan. "But first we must make a hook to hang your Perico's cage on."

They made a hook and fastened it up on the *patio* wall. Then they hung the parrot's cage from it, so that Perico would feel at home in the sunlight and fresh air.

Then Grandfather Juan sat down in his big leather armchair and Little Paco ran to bring him his work: he was sewing crystal straps and crystal buttons on a pair of fine silver slippers. Grandfather Juan

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bent over the little slippers, stitching away, and soon was telling this story to Little Paco, who sat cross-legged on the warm tile floor of their *patio* in far-away Mexico.

Long ago and long ago, when the moon was a little white dove in the skies, and the sun was a golden eagle, there was a great tree in the center of the world. It was a tree with leaves of many colors—red leaves, blue leaves, green leaves—and it was called the Tree of Life. Under it lived all people, and all were happy, for their hearts were full of love and their lives were spent at useful work. But a time came when the people began to lift their eyes from their work and long for other things.

Now, there were four roads leading away from the Tree of Life: a white road, a red road, a brown road, and a black road. They stretched over the plains of the world as far as eye could see.

The people, growing restless, wished to follow the roads and find out where they led. Therefore they stopped working, and, being idle, they began to quarrel. After a while they divided into four groups, and each group chose a road to travel and went away rejoicing and singing. One group went over the white road, one over the red road, one over the brown road, and one over the black road. The Tree of Life, in the center of the world, was left alone.

In time the people found that they were able to live away from the center of the world. So they all settled down to work again; but

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they were no longer happy. Great mountains and valleys separated the four tribes; and yet, although they had not met since they parted beneath the Tree of Life, each thought the others had better lands and better crops and more time to sing and dance than it had. So the people of each tribe grew bitter and blamed Teotl (tay-oh-tl), the great god who made the world, for their unhappiness.

"Why didn't he let us take one of the other roads?" the people of each tribe asked. "We might have been happy now if he had!"

Teotl, hearing them, sent a thunderous response from the sky, and fire out of the clouds, and a mighty rain. Never before had there been such great sheets of water from the heavens, and never before had there been such deafening thunder or such a terrifying fire in the sky. Then Teotl went to the Tree of Life in the center of the world.

"Come down!" he called. "Come down, my bird!"

The red and the blue and the green leaves heard him, and shaped themselves into a beautiful bird, a great red and blue and green parrot, that flew out of the tree. When the bird flew down from the Tree of Life the earth shook, and the Tree trembled all over and withered away. Then Teotl spoke to the bird.

"Tell all the peoples of the world," he said, "that because they have been vain and selfish, the waters will overwhelm and drown them, saving only those who have blamed no one but themselves for their own mistakes. Those who escape will be the color of the road they have followed." Because he is merciful, Teotl added: "And as

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a sign of my promise, you may carry them fire, the holy breath that will warm them and save them until some day you come to them again." He gave the bird a withered branch of the Tree of Life to carry, and that branch was Fire.

So the bird flew away to tell the people what Teotl had said. The fiery branch burned his beak and made it crooked, and the sparks got into his eyes and made them red. He flew until his wings were too tired and then he walked and walked until his toes turned in. He grew more and more weary, but still he walked on in the never-ending rains. When at last he reached the first of the tribes, his voice had become loud and hoarse.

When he had given his message to all peoples, the green and red and blue bird flew back to the center of the world. He told Teotl that his message had been delivered, and that he had left fire with each tribe to keep the people warm and save those who escaped from the waters.

Teotl nodded gravely.

"Go again, voice of my soul," he said, "and tell them they shall live a life of dreary pain until the day you come to them again. On that day you will speak with a sweet, soft voice, and sing a song of wonder that will make the heart rejoice. Then, along the red and white and brown and black roads, they will follow you with joy to the center of the world. Your voice in their ears will be a song of peace, like the music of the winds among the palms; it will call them like the sound of

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waves upon the shore, and sing like waters falling over stones. The withered Tree of Life in the center of the world will grow and be their shelter as before; and you will fly back to the heart of the tree, and none shall hear your singing any more. But the leaves of the Tree, of red and green and blue, will whisper words of peace up above; and everywhere below the dove of peace shall go, and the hearts of men again shall fill with love. And all shall have one Master, one color, and one creed: a heart of love, a mind of love, and love in every deed. And like curling snakes, the roads of red and brown and black and white shall roll into each other's mouths and vanish from men's sight."

"So you see, Little Paco," said Grandfather Juan, "why your little green and blue parrot has a crooked bill and red eyes, and curled-up toes and a rasping voice. And you see how important it is to blame no one else for mistakes you make. We should love all the other people in the world, too, no matter what their color is; because if we love them long enough and faithfully, the day will come sooner for the talking bird to return and lead us all back to the Tree of Life, beneath which there is only peace and love."

Grandfather Juan held up a little silver slipper to see if the crystal-beaded strap was on straight. Little Paco thanked his grandfather for telling him such a nice story, and after that, whenever he looked at his Perico, he smiled and thought of the bird that flew down from the Tree of Life.



THE EAGLE WARRIOR

Little Paco had finished putting lettuce leaves in the cages of the yellow canaries. He had given his dog Chuchu a nice dinner of *tor-tillas*. He had given Tonch, the cat, a saucer of milk. He had swept out the little *patio* where the four flowerpots were. He had gone to the store to get vegetables for the soup: carrots, turnips, squash ("baby pumpkins") herbs, onions, cabbage, and parsley. He had built his

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mother a little fire of black charcoal and sweet-smelling pine sticks, fanning it with a braided palm-leaf fan so that it would burn brightly.

"You may play now, Little Paco," said his dear mother. "You have been a good boy, and there is nothing more to be done before dinner."

So Little Paco ran out to play. On the street he saw twelve burros loaded with gunny sacks full of charcoal. He ran after them.

"*Ah-rrrr-eh! Ah-rrrr-eh!*" yelled the burro man, and he switched a long piece of rope at their tails. He wanted them to hurry, but they kept on walking slowly; burros like to take their time.

"*Ah-rrrr-eh! Ah-rrrr-eh!*" cried Little Paco, and he switched a little piece of string at the tails of the burros. The burro man, who was walking behind the last burro of all, looked at Little Paco.

"Would you like a ride?" he asked.

"Yes, if you please," answered Little Paco excitedly.

So the burro man lifted him up on top of a big gunny sack of charcoal, and there he sat, like a king on his high throne, while the burro walked down the street and the burro man switched his rope and yelled "*Ah-rrrr-eh! Ah-rrrr-eh!*"

After a while they came to a big gate. It had been a gate to the city during the days when the city was encircled by a big wall to protect it from Indian raids. Here the man stopped, and lifted him down.

"Well, *niñito* (neen-yee-toh)," he said "you will have to get down here, because I am going all the way out to Chapala. It is a long run back for your little legs, but you will get home all right."

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Little Paco thanked him for the ride and started home. He was a tired boy when he got there.

"Little Paco! Little Paco! Where have you been?" asked his mother and his grandfather.

"Way off, riding on one of the burro man's burros," he said. "I had a wonderful ride!"

"You mustn't do that, Little Paco," said his Grandfather Juan. "Some day you might be carried so far away that you couldn't get back again, and then what would we do? You might be a grown-up man before we found you again—and even then we might not know you. The same thing might happen to you that happened to the Eagle Prince."

"Oh, Grandfather!" cried Little Paco. "Will you tell me about him?"

"First you must eat your dinner," said his mother. "I have made meat balls for you to-day!"

"Meat balls! Thank you, dear Mother, thank you!" cried Little Paco.

So his mother gave him a *tortilla* and a big bowl of the little balls of meat and rice in rich, thick vegetable soup. After he finished the soup, his mother gave him some nice brown beans. And then, for desert, he had a piece of candy made of coconut and sugar and milk, flavored with cinnamon.

Then he went out into the *patio*, where Grandfather Juan was al-

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ready busy mending the heels of a pair of big shoes. Little Paco sat down cross-legged on the clean tile floor. The canaries were singing in the warm sunshine, Chuchu was dozing, and Tonch was sunning herself and licking her fur. Little Paco felt so happy and so full of good food that he was almost as sleepy as Chuchu. But he couldn't be really sleepy, for Grandfather Juan had a story to tell him! So he blinked his eyes wide awake as Grandfather Juan began the story of the Eagle Prince.

Long ago and long ago, when our grandfathers' grandfathers lived where the City of Mexico now is, so long ago that it was in the days when there was nothing there but a great lake, there was a king of the Aztecs called Ilcahua (eel-kah-wah). He was proud, he was powerful, he was cruel.

King Ilcahua had a little son called Prince Eagle. His mother loved him so much that it made the proud king angry. But the queen spent most of her time with the little prince, for the king was so cruel that she was never happy with him. The king grew angrier and angrier, until one day he decided to send his little son away.

In those days kings' sons always had to serve the god of war. So, whenever a little prince was born, the wise men would take a long sharp thorn and prick the picture of a serpent on his arm. The serpent was the sign of the god of war, and to wear the serpent on one's skin meant that one must grow up and serve that cruel god.

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So the wise men came and pricked the serpent's picture on the little prince's arm. Then the king sent him to a family that lived far away, and had that family's little son brought to the queen, so that she would not be too lonely.

The little prince was too small to realize what was happening, so he was happy with his new parents, who were very poor and simple. But after a while there was a wicked war, and the prince was separated from them, and then there was no one to know who he really was! He was found by some other good people, who brought him up and taught him many useful things. He became a fine young man, for he was wise and brave and kind. He did not know that he was a prince, the son of the king, and nobody else knew it, either.

In the palace the king and the queen were filled with sorrow, for they thought they had truly lost him. King Ilcahua repented now for all the evil he had done. He would weep, and wish he had been a good man. The queen felt sorry for him, for he needed his son now, and he felt he never would see him again.

The prince did so many brave things that after a while he was a general in his father's big army. We know, of course, that fighting is very bad and that war is wicked; but in those days nobody knew that, and the Indians were always fighting and making war upon one another. Every year they had a Battle of Flowers. They fought each other, each tribe trying to take all the prisoners it could. These prisoners were called Flowers, and were expected to go as messengers to the

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Sun, to ask him to be good to the victors. The prince always captured many Flowers at the Battles of the Flowers, and so he became what the Aztecs called an Eagle warrior, which was the next to the highest honor any one in the kingdom could obtain. The very highest rank of all was that of Tiger warrior. But only the sons of kings could be Tiger warriors.

The time came for a Battle of the Flowers between the Aztecs and the Chalcans. The Eagle Warrior led his army to battle and was in the forefront of the fighting. He fought so well that he soon had five prisoners. When he captured the sixth, he was astonished to find that his prisoner had a soft voice, beautiful eyes, and gentle ways. Suddenly the Eagle Warrior knew he had captured a girl and not a man at all! He was very sorry he had hurt her arm. As soon as the fighting was over he carried her to a little river and bathed her wound. He asked her why she was fighting, and she said that she was taking the place of her brother. When he saw how beautiful she was, he loved her, and asked her if she would marry him.

She reminded him that only the king could say what prisoners should do.

"I love you," she said, "and I shall marry you gladly if the king will allow me."

One of the Tiger warriors was jealous of the Eagle Warrior; he knew that he was the bravest man in the land. He knew that the Eagle might become the highest Tiger warrior in the land, higher than

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himself, were it not for the fact that nobody knew who his parents were. But the prince knew that this cruel Tiger warrior wanted to do mischief to him. He was afraid the Tiger warrior would want to take his beautiful Chalcan away from him, so he told her not to let any one know that she was a girl, but to continue wearing her brother's clothes.

So the Eagle warrior, the unknown prince, appeared at Court. All of the Tiger warriors were there, and all of the other Eagle warriors, and all of the Flowers captured in the Battle of the Flowers. And our prince stood near the king, for he was the greatest Eagle warrior of all. "Sire," he said, "may I have one of the Flower prisoners for my own?"

"Which one?" asked King Ilcahua.

"The little one standing over there," answered the prince, pointing.

All of the people looked at the little Chalcan Flower prisoner.

But the wicked-hearted chief of the Tiger warriors smiled cruelly.

"No!" he cried, "I want that one myself!"

The king didn't know what to do. He *wanted* to make his bravest Eagle warrior happy; but he *had* to give the Tiger warrior first place and first choice. So he turned to the Tiger warrior.

"You may have the young Chalcan," he said sadly.

"Well," said the wicked Tiger warrior, "now I shall give the young Chalcan as a Flower to send to the Sun."

The people all felt sad then, because they knew that meant the



"I give myself instead."

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poor young Chalcan would have to take a message to the Sun; and no one ever came back after making that journey.

"I give myself instead!" cried the prince. "I claim my right to go there instead of this girl!"

The people were astonished, because no one had guessed that the young Chalcan was a girl. And no one could keep the Eagle warrior from going to the Sun in place of the Chalcan, because one of their laws was that any one could give himself in place of another to carry a message to the Sun.

The next day in the Temple of the Sun the warriors were beating on hollow logs and blowing into big conch shells, for a Flower was to be sent to the Sun. All the people were there because their brave Eagle warrior would soon fly into the heavens forever. He would ask the Sun to be kind to his people—but he would never come back.

The prince came, without his shield and spear, without his bracelets and his collars and his feathers. All he wore was a tiger skin, because on the journey to the Sun messengers were expected to have little to carry.

He walked up the thousand steps to the very top of the temple. The Sun was rising higher and higher. When it reached the very top of the temple on a level with him, the warrior would step into the great golden bowl, and no one ever would see him again.

The Sun rose and rose. Every one was still, watching the brave warrior where he stood waiting.

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The Sun reached the top of the temple!

The Eagle warrior lifted his arms and was just about to step off into the golden bowl, when——

“Wait!” shouted King Ilcahua. “My son! Wait!”

You see, when the warrior lifted his arms, the sunlight struck on the picture of the serpent pricked on his skin by a thorn years before, and King Ilcahua knew then that this was his own lost son!

The prince dropped his arms and stood waiting. In that very minute, the Sun went by, and it was too late, that day, to send a Flower messenger to the Sun.

So Prince Eagle became the chief Tiger warrior of the Aztecs, and married the beautiful Chalcan. And his father and mother were almost as happy as the prince himself and his beautiful Chalcan bride.

“You see, dear Little Paco,” said Grandfather Juan, as he finished mending the pair of shoes, “that if the king had loved his son enough, and had been kind, they would all have been happy together; but because he was so unkind, he and the queen suffered for years, thinking they had lost their son, and the prince suffered, too, and was nearly lost to them forever. Dear Little Paco, you should always love every one in your family; and your heart should be filled with love for others, too.” And Grandfather Juan smiled at Little Paco, whose eyes were upturned to the great golden bowl of the Mexican Sun.



BIRD OF LOVE

Little Paco and his grandfather had been to a corn-eating party. When the corn is young and green in the fields, and the grains of corn are milky and sweet, the people of Mexico invite their friends to a cornfield party.

In the center of the cornfield, usually under a big tree, there is a

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fire. Over the fire there is a great pot of boiling water, filled with ears of juicy corn. The people, seated around the fire, tell stories and play games and eat quantities of corn that has been boiled in the shuck. How good the new corn tastes, when the husk is peeled off and you eat it with salt and white cheese! Sometimes guests roast ears of unhusked corn among the coals of the fire. Then the corn has a sugary, toasted taste.

After the corn-eating there had been *piñatas* (peen-yah-tahs) for the children. *Piñatas* are great jars dressed up to look like clowns or ships, or swans, and filled with goodies. They hang from the branch of a tree until some lucky little boy or girl breaks them. The one at this party was dressed like a clown, with red and white tissue paper for his costume, and with a cardboard head painted to look like a laughing clown's face. The older people blindfolded all the little boys and girls in turn, and gave each one a chance to break the *piñata* with a big stick. Little Paco broke it! Then all the little boys and girls dropped down on their knees and scrambled to see who would get the largest number of nuts and candies and oranges and bananas! What fun it was! Little Paco got two bananas, one orange, and a great many nuts and pieces of candy.

After a while the party was over, and Little Paco and his grandfather and many of the other people got on burros and rode home.

They jogged along the white and dusty road, sometimes beneath dark banana trees and wild fig trees. The air was full of the fragrance

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of night-blooming flowers. Little Paco heard the wild doves in the trees, making a sweet sound like the soft laughter of a person whose heart is full of love. All around, the fireflies were lighting and re-lighting their little lamps, and overhead the stars twinkled in the black sky.

Grandfather Juan held Little Paco close so that he wouldn't slip off the burro.

"Do you hear the laughter of the little birds of love?" he asked. "And do you see the little winking fireflies?"

"Yes, Grandfather," answered Little Paco. "Tell me the story about them!"

"How did you guess there is a story about them, little eater-of-corn?" asked Grandfather Juan. "There *is* a story, a very nice one. But if I tell it to you you must promise to keep your eyes open! For you mustn't scare the burro by falling off his back!"

Little Paco laughed. He knew that their steady old burro wouldn't be scared at anything.

"I'll stay awake, Grandfather," he promised. "Now tell me the story!"

So this is the story Grandfather Juan told Little Paco, as they jogged along under the stars of far-away Mexico.

Long ago and long ago, there was in Mexico a wild, cruel Indian tribe called the Mijes (mee-hehz). And the wildest and cruelest of

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them was the Black Tiger, the prince of the Mijes. He was so bad that the Zapotecs (zap-oh-teks) would tell their children, when they cried, to hush or the Black Tiger would get them.

The Mijes did not like the Zapotecs, and were always making war on them. The Zapotecs were peaceful people. All they wanted was to be left alone, so that they could do their work and live in peace. But the Mijes wouldn't let them. They were always coming down out of the stony mountains, where they lived, to the green fields where the Zapotecs lived. And when they came, they would steal the Zapotecs' food and burn their fields and houses and do many other evil things.

One night the Black Tiger had a dream. In the dream he saw a most beautiful maiden, as sweet and as gentle as a little white dove. She was walking on the banks of a stream under the silvery moonlight, and she was singing a Zapotec song.

The Black Tiger's heart went out to her. He knew he was very wicked, that he had stolen from the Zapotecs and burned their fields and done so many things to be sorry for! Yet he went to the maiden and fell on his knees before her.

"Beautiful Zapotec maiden," he cried, "I see in your eyes what I have never before seen in the eyes of any living creature: peace, and love, and rest. I am the Black Tiger, and I have done many cruel things; but I am sick at heart to think of the things I have done, and I want to learn from you a better life—a life in which love governs, instead of strife."



The black tiger fell on his knees before her.

BIRD OF LOVE

The Zapotec maiden was frightened, because she had never seen so cruel a man before; but she stretched out her little hand to him.

"I have never known anything but love," she said, "and I will teach it to you, if I can."

Then the Black Tiger felt peace in his heart—peace as quiet as moonlight and as sweet as the perfume of flowers. But he awoke from his dream, and there he was in his ugly cave, high up among the stony mountains where he lived with the other Mijes.

He lay there a long while, thinking of the beautiful Zapotec maiden. Then he changed himself into a real Black Tiger, for he had that power, learned from his wizard father. He ran down the side of the mountain, lashing his tail from side to side, sparks of fire coming from his nostrils. He was terrible to behold! The little sparks from his black nostrils flickered and waved before him in the air like tiny lanterns. In order to give the little lanterns life, the Mije prince said a spell.

"Go, go, little flowers of light!" he crooned. "Go to my love, the daughter of the moon! Make a vine of tiny fiery flowers through the night, little lanterns, to light the way to my love!"

Then the tiny starry lights, the little blossoms of fire, began zig-zagging their way through the night, leading the Black Tiger to his love. They led him to the couch on which the beautiful Zapotec maiden was sleeping. Opening her eyes and seeing the Black Tiger standing there, she was not afraid, because her heart was full of love.

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There was such tenderness and sorrow and devotion in the eyes of the Black Tiger that the Zapotec princess fell in love with him. But the Black Tiger, suddenly realizing that her eyes were upon him, and knowing that he would be killed if he was found near her, vanished, for he had that power, also. And the Zapotec princess closed her eyes and slept, and when she awakened she thought she had dreamed of the Black Tiger.

In the meantime the Zapotec king called his son to him.

"I heard the Owl last night," he said. "He was outside my door, talking. I wanted to know what he was saying, so I changed myself into a Cu bird, and when the Owl called, 'Cu? Cu?' I answered, 'Here am I.' The Owl came to me and said, 'The king has a beautiful daughter, but he will lose her.' 'Is there nothing the king can do to prevent it?' I asked. But the Owl flew on, crying, 'Cu? Cu?' and I saw that he had recognized me, for I had changed myself into a Cu bird too rapidly, and had forgotten to make my feathers rainbow-colored, as the Cu bird's feathers are!"

The prince was grief-stricken.

"Did the Owl say," he asked, "that my sister would surely be lost to us?"

"That is what he said," the king answered. "I want you to take her away to a temple far in the south, and hide her there, where nothing can harm her and no one can find her. Perhaps we can save her in that way."

BIRD OF LOVE

So the prince took his sister, with many warriors and servants, and started out. They came at length to a great white deserted city in the center of the southern jungle. Here, they thought, they were safe. They chose the finest palace of all and spread rugs on the floors and put curtains between the rooms and made everything beautiful and comfortable, for they were planning to live there always.

Below their new home was a thick green forest. Suddenly, one day, there came a cry from the edge of that forest. There stood the Black Tiger, looking up at the beautiful Zapotecan princess.

The little princess reached out her arms.

"It is the Tiger I saw in my dream!" she cried. And before her brother could stop her, she flew down the steps and into the forest.

He ran after her, but when he got into the forest, all he saw was a little white dove flying away under the green branches. He hunted and hunted, but without avail. Then he rushed back to the palace, and blew a loud blast on a conch shell to call his warriors together. He told them to search the forest for the little lost princess.

They hunted and hunted. After a long while they came back. None of them had been able to find her. But they had all seen a strange sight: a little white dove sitting on the branch of a tree while a Black Tiger on the floor of the forest below looked up at it with an expression of gentleness and love. And it was evident that the dove was not afraid of the Black Tiger, nor the Black Tiger cruel to the dove. And in the dusk, little fireflies danced around them.

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They never found the little princess, and the Zapotec prince had to go back and tell his father she was lost, just as the Owl had said she would be.

But the Mije prince, the Black Tiger, was happy in the woods with the little white dove. And the Mije tribe lived at peace with its neighbors from that day, and never again did evil things to hurt the Zapotec people. And the Zapotecs never knew that it was their own princess and her great love that had brought this peace to them.

"So," said Grandfather Juan, "that is why the little doves to this day laugh with love under the wild fig trees; and that is why the little fire blossoms of the lightning bugs fill the air near them. And you can see how even the hardest heart may become kind and gentle if only some one, somewhere, has love enough to soften it."



JUMP-OVER-THE-WALL BIRD

"Tu-wee, tu-wee, tu-wee, tui, tui, tui!" sang The Bird That Jumps Over the Wall.

Little Paco opened his eyes. He could see the merry little bird from where he lay. Through the door of his bedroom he could see him standing on one of the flowerpots in the *patio*, his long black tail feathers shining in the morning sun. It wasn't time yet to get up, so Little Paco turned over and covered up his ears, saying the merry song of The Bird That Jumps Over the Wall to himself.

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"*Tu-wee, tu-wee, tu-wee, tui, tui, tui!*"

After a while his mother called him.

"Get up, Little Paco! This is the day of San Pedro!"

Little Paco jumped happily out of bed. He knew that the day of San Pedro meant a trip to the little town of San Pedro near by, to see the sights of the carnival the town would have in honor of its patron saint. There would be roasted corn, *tamales*, and chicken to eat; oranges and orange-limes, juicy and sweet; sugar cane and cactus fruit. No wonder Little Paco almost put on his trousers wrong side out!

Right after breakfast Little Paco and Grandfather Juan went to San Pedro. They rode on the street car, which was full to overflowing; and on the road that ran beside the car track they saw hundreds of people riding or walking toward the little village. The women were wearing bright-colored blouses and long starched skirts of pink and blue and yellow. Most of the men had on great straw sombreros and white clothes. Those who rode horseback wore boots and tight leather trousers and embroidered shirt and short leather jackets. The jackets of the *charros*, as these dressed-up riders were called, were heavily embroidered; and their felt hats were decorated with gold or silver braid.

When they arrived, what a good time Grandfather Juan and Little Paco had! They threw knives at little targets, and Little Paco won a red handkerchief for hitting the center of one of them. They

JUMP-OVER-THE-WALL BIRD

paid a penny to turn a big wheel, and when it pointed to 5, Little Paco was given five pieces of sweet cake. For lunch they bought chicken and watermelon. Then they bought sugar cane, and sat on a curbstone to chew it, peeling it with their teeth.

In the afternoon they went into a building where pottery was made, and watched the potters at work, shaping the black clay into graceful bowls and cups and vases to be baked, and painting them, when they had been baked, with glazes, so that they could be fired again and thus finished. Nearly every one in San Pedro made pottery; even the Mayor did!

By the time evening had come, they had done a great many other interesting things. When it was time for supper, they had more chicken and toasted *tortillas* with lettuce, cheese, and onions on them, and a pineapple drink.

Little Paco was growing tired, and by the time Grandfather Juan said they would ride home in an oxcart, he could hardly keep his eyes open. But when the two great wooden wheels of the oxcart began bumping over the cobbled road, Little Paco's eyes opened wide. Through a chink in the canvas roof above the cart, he could see the great round red moon, rising in a sky that after a while would be filled with as many stars as there are cobblestones between San Pedro and Guadalajara. They passed people going home in the dark, singing. They passed other people who were playing guitars. One of the men in the oxcart began to play a guitar, and soon every

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one was singing, even the driver of the two plodding long-horned oxen.

When they were nearly home, a little bird, awakened by the sound of their singing or by the canvas top of the oxcart brushing against the tree in which it had been asleep, sang a few familiar notes:

"Tu-wee, tu-wee, tu-wee, tui, tui, tui!"

"The Bird That Jumps Over the Wall, Grandfather!" cried Little Paco.

"Yes, that is what it is," replied Grandfather Juan. "And when we go into the house, I shall tell you a story about The Bird That Jumps Over the Wall, if you would like to hear it."

"Of course I would like to hear it!" said Little Paco.

When they arrived home, Little Paco was all waked up and eager to hear Grandfather Juan's story. So, far away in Mexico, after Little Paco had been put to bed, Grandfather Juan told him the story of The Bird That Jumps Over the Wall.

Long ago and long ago, no one knew that the Jump-Over-the-Wall Bird is a really good bird. Every one was afraid of him, for they thought he brought bad luck. When people saw him coming, they would always run away, because they didn't want the bad luck he was bringing. Women would throw their aprons over their heads when they heard him, so that they never even saw him.

JUMP-OVER-THE-WALL BIRD

In those days there lived a wicked king and his beautiful queen. He had a magnificent palace, and a garden full of rare plants and singing birds, and a great marble swimming pool filled with clear blue water. He had slaves to beat the air of his throne room with fans made of the finest of blue feathers. For he was king of the Aztecs, and his will was law.

The wicked king heard one day of the poet Wise Coyote. Wise Coyote was a brave and wise young man. He spent his life going among all the people of the kingdom to exhort them to give up their wicked ways and live good, kind, useful lives; and wherever he went, the people loved him. He was a poet, and he made up beautiful songs that he taught the people, songs they sang as they worked.

"If you want your lives to be beautiful," he would say to them, "they must first be good." He taught them how to live good and beautiful lives.

That made the bad king angry, because he knew that if they all learned to do good, after a while they wouldn't want him to be king any more. So he decided to catch the good poet and shut him up where he would never sing to the people again nor teach them good any more.

The king sent his soldiers to capture the poet. Wise Coyote was playing a ball game. His friends told him to run away and hide, because the soldiers were coming for him; but he continued playing. When the soldiers came, he was kind and polite to them and invited

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them to dinner. While they were eating, he went into the next room, but as the door was open and they could see him, the soldiers were not afraid that he might escape. Suddenly a fire in the middle of the room sent up such clouds of incense—that is, perfumed smoke—that for a minute the soldiers did not see him. In that minute he went through a hidden door that took him into a tunnel to an old water pipe, through which he crawled and escaped!

The wicked king was very angry when he heard of this; so he offered rewards for the capture of the poet. He said he would give his captor money, and lands, and houses, and servants, and beautiful gifts of gold and silver, and all the corn he could eat for the rest of his life. The wicked king's soldiers hunted everywhere for Wise Coyote.

One day the poet went to the hut of a poor friend who hid him under a heap of maguey fiber. The soldiers came and searched his hut, but did not find Wise Coyote. Another time he was going through a field when the soldiers came by, and was saved from capture because a girl covered him with a heap of stalks that she was reaping.

But a day at last came when the soldiers captured him. The bad king had him put in a wooden cage in the center of a labyrinth in the palace gardens. No one knew the way in except the guards. The king intended that he should never be let out again.

The queen, who was bad, but not as wicked as the king, decided one night that she would go into the labyrinth and tease the poor

JUMP-OVER-THE-WALL BIRD

young poet. She asked a guard to show her the way through the labyrinth. It was a wonderful moonlight night as she hurried down the crooked ways of the maze, with her tame tiger pulling at the long silver chain in her hand.

She went right into the cage where the poet was, but she told the guards to watch. Then she began to taunt him and call him ugly names. He did not answer her, and so, in a fit of anger, she hit him. Her silver rings broke the skin of his cheek, and a little stream of blood ran down the side of his face. The tame tiger smelled the blood, and jumped—at the queen! But the poet leaped, too, and seized the tiger by the throat. They wrestled with each other until the poet made the tiger quiet and still.

The queen knew the poet had saved her life, and she was terribly ashamed. She had come to do him harm, and he had done her good! She asked him to tell her what made him so good. So he talked to her a long time about how much better it is to do good and have people love you, than to do evil and have them not like you. And the queen's hard heart softened, and she cried, and promised the poet to forsake her old ways.

Then she told the guards to bring the poet good clothes and food; so they spread fine skins over the floor of the cage and brought him a robe made of fine little feathers of every hue, and a dinner of turkey, and a corn-meal drink, and deer meat.

Then the queen held up a cup of *octli* (oak-tee).

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"Drink some of this good *octli*!" she said, and handed it to him.

He drank a little, and then said, "It has a queer taste!"

"Never mind," said the queen. "You will like it!"

So the poet drank the *octli*. But he fell asleep almost immediately, for the queen had put a sleeping powder in it.

Just then The Bird That Jumps Over the Wall flew to the queen's feet. He had jumped over all the walls of the labyrinth!

"Take heart, beautiful queen," he sang to her, "and do what you know is right!"

And the queen, who, while she had an evil heart, had always been afraid of The Bird That Jumps Over the Wall, knew now that her heart was true and she need never be afraid of anything again. And since her heart was good she was able to recognize what a fine, kind heart was in the little bird.

She called her servants, and told them to put Wise Coyote in a boat and row him over Lake Tezcuco back to the kingdom of his fathers.

"Oh!" they cried, "but if the king finds that the poet is gone, he will kill you!"

But the queen was determined.

"It is right that this good man should be free," she said. "Take him, and do not return. As for myself, I shall do what is right and have no fear."

So the servants took Wise Coyote away, and the queen slipped back



"Row him to the kingdom of his fathers."

JUMP-OVER-THE-WALL BIRD

into the palace. She knew that when the king learned of what she had done, he would be very angry. But she went to her couch and wrapped herself in pure white skins and went to sleep. And in her sleep all of her dreams were sweet.

In the morning—what do you think happened? Before the bad king knew that the poet was gone, the people came angrily about the door of the palace, crying out that they were tired of having such a bad king, and that they didn't intend to have him any more! So the wicked king dressed up like a servant and ran away, and no one ever saw him again!

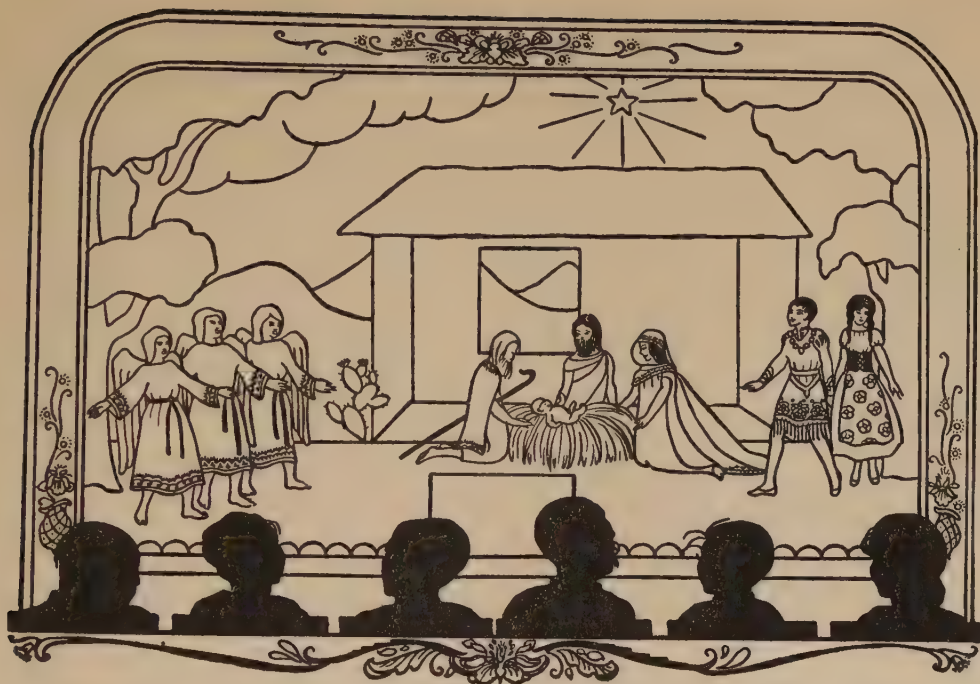
Then the queen, whose heart had become gentle and kind, ruled the people so well that they were happier than they had ever been before. In time the people of her kingdom and the people of the poet Wise Coyote's kingdom became good friends. Wise Coyote knew in his heart how good she was, because she had risked her life to save his. It was that queen of the Aztecs who taught the people of Mexico to love The Bird That Jumps Over the Wall.

"So you see, dear Little Paco," said Grandfather Juan, "that if you are kind and good every one will love you and help you. But if you are like the wicked king, you will never be really happy. The queen was happy even when she thought she might have to die the next day, because in her heart she knew she was doing the right

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thing. Because her heart was pure and good, she knew she need not fear anything, even death. If you grow up to let good always rule your heart, Little Paco, you need never fear anything in the world." And Grandfather Juan smiled at Little Paco, whose sleepy eyes were already closing.





THE GREEN SERPENTS

Little Paco and his Grandfather Juan had gone to see the Christmas play. They were in a large tent that was pitched in the middle of the great white avenue of San Juan. They sat on little folding chairs, waiting for the Christmas play to commence. Little boys were moving through the audience, selling salted toasted pumpkin seeds and peanuts, and little girls were selling hot *tacos*.

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After a while the play began. It was about the Christ Child who was born in Bethlehem so long ago, and about His sweet mother. It opened with a scene from the Garden of Eden, with a great serpent coming down out of a tree to offer an apple to Adam and Eve. Later on, in the scene about the Flood, all of the animals were there, cut out of big boards and painted with bright colors. And there were angels, and wise men, and shepherds. It was a most interesting play.

Every time the curtain went down, Little Paco would eat salted pumpkin seeds and peanuts. A man who was selling *pulque* (pool-keh) came by their seats, but Grandfather Juan refused to buy any.

When the play was over Grandfather Juan and Little Paco hurried home, because they were having a party at their house that evening.

Little Paco's family didn't have any Christmas tree, but their friends all gave them presents, and they in turn gave presents to their friends. In the morning when he woke up, Little Paco's shoes would be full of all sorts of nice things. Every one had special Christmas cake, covered over with a sweet caramel and almond icing that is made only at Christmas time. There would be pink and blue candy flowers on the cake, and little silver candy trimmings!

For eight nights Little Paco had been to parties at the houses of various friends. They had played at being Joseph and Mary looking for a place to stay. They would walk singing through the halls and corridors of the house, and before each door they would stop and

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ask for shelter. The people inside the room would sing back the words, "No, the inn is full!" The last night of all was to be at Little Paco's house. In one room of his house a large table was set up. On it were tiny little six-inch Christmas trees, and little sheep and camels and goats and a little inn with a star above it. And there were little wax figures of Joseph and Mary and the Christ Child. The people who were playing at being Joseph and Mary would sing through the halls, as they had done before; and inside the rooms other singers would sing that the inn was full—until they came to the last room, where everything was prepared for their coming. They would be let in to the stable, and every one would have Christmas cake and candy, and *piñatas* full of goodies, and cakes like thin toasted waffles, which are eaten with sweet brown syrup.

After the party was over, Little Paco found that he was very tired, for he had eaten a great deal of Christmas cake and candy and had laughed and sung so much. So Grandfather Juan put him to bed. His brothers and sisters were helping clean up, and his mother was pinning the window curtains over to the sides of the casement, and putting tall lighted candles on the tables where the manger scene was, so that people going by could see it.

"Grandfather," said Little Paco, "why couldn't we have some *pulque* when we were at the play?"

Grandfather Juan explained how evil *pulque* is.

"You wouldn't want to be silly, with your head like a balloon,

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and not even know where your feet were taking you, would you?" asked Grandfather Juan. "*Pulque* is a bad drink. It has done much harm to our country. It is better to drink cinnamon tea, or good corn gruel, or lemon tea made of fresh lemon leaves: they have a better flavor, and a sweeter smell, and they are good for you, and not bad, as *pulque* is."

"Is there a story about *pulque*, Grandfather?" asked Little Paco.

Grandfather Juan smiled. Then he sat down in a chair by the side of Little Paco's bed in far-away Mexico, and told him this story.

Long ago and long ago there lived a cruel and ambitious king called King Zotzil (zoht-zeel). He pretended to be a friend of the king of the Aztecs, but really he was plotting how he could steal the king of the Aztecs' kingdom from him.

King Zotzil would lend his own soldiers to the king of the Aztecs, hoping that they would learn the methods and strength of the Aztecs while fighting for them. He was so bad that he decided to marry his beautiful daughter, Three Butterflies, to the king of the Aztecs, and make her find out all of the Aztecs' secrets, and tell him so that he could fight them, and take their kingdom away from them.

But his daughter did not want to marry the king of the Aztecs. She had seen a slave, a Mixtec slave that served her father. He was a tall, strong young man, with wonderful copper-colored skin and eyes like an eagle's, and he walked like a tiger. Yet he was so kind

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and so gentle and so good that the princess lost her heart to him. She wanted to marry him, and not the Aztec king. She felt so badly about having to marry the Aztec king that after a while she fell sick.

King Zotzil didn't know what to do. He didn't really love his daughter, but he did want her to get well quickly so that he could make her marry the Aztec king! He called his doctors to the palace, and they brought all kinds of medicines made of green weeds and poisonous plants and serpents' teeth. But in spite of all their potions, the little princess still did nothing but weep and sigh.

After a while King Zotzil got really worried, so he sent word out over his land that he would give the princess' hand in marriage to any one who could save her from the sickness that made her weep and sigh all day and all night.

Then the Mixtec slave came to him.

"King Zotzil," he said, "I do not want to marry your daughter, Three Butterflies. But I do want freedom to return to my own country. If I find a cure for your daughter will you give me my freedom?"

King Zotzil promised that he would. So the Mixtec slave prepared for a long journey in search of a cure. He put a big helmet on his head, and he painted himself in bright colors. He put thick sandals on his feet. He fastened a shield over his breast, a shield made of animal skins and tufts of cotton, so that if any bad savages shot poisoned arrows at him, they would stick in the cotton and not hurt him. Then he took a strong bow and a quiverful of arrows and set out.

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He marched over the hills and mountains; he went through lonely forests, full of wild tigers and lions; and he went over high peaks, where great black eagles floated in the air.

Everywhere he went he searched for a cure for the princess.

One day he met a lean and ragged old man.

"What are you looking for?" the old man asked him.

"I am looking for a cure for the Princess Three Butterflies," answered the slave.

"All that Three Butterflies needs is love," replied the lean and ragged old man. "Take love to her, and she will give you love. But take to King Zotzil the juice you will find in the valley of the green serpents. Take it in a big jar. After King Zotzil drinks that juice, he will forget his cruelties and his ambitions. And you and the Princess Three Butterflies will be married and happy!"

"Who are you?" asked the slave. "And where is the valley of which you speak?"

"I am a lost king, less than a lean coyote of the mountains. You will have to find the valley of the bunches of serpents yourself. Kill those serpents, and when you are thirsty, drink the juice of life and of death. When you are refreshed, drink no more, but take the rest to the tyrant."

Then the lost king disappeared into the forest.

The slave did not know what he meant. But he walked on, hunting and hunting, until he came to a wide valley full of maguey plants.



He struck at the green leaves.

THE GREEN SERPENTS

As far as he could see there were maguey plants, and each one looked like a bunch of big green serpents!

"This must be the valley the lost king meant," thought the slave. And drawing his sword, he struck at the green leaves that looked like green serpents, chopping them down, leaving behind him a long line of withering leaves, like dead green serpents.

He continued, then, over other hills and through other valleys, but at last he started back again. He came back the same way, and when he came to the valley of the maguey plants, he was thirsty and tired. Walking through the valley, he noticed a sweet odor; the waters of life could not have had a more refreshing scent! He looked about him, and in the heart of each maguey plant he found a round bowl, full of the sweet water that is called honey water. He drank and drank, until he was completely refreshed. Then he put the sweet water in a big gourd that he found, to take it to King Zotzil.

He had to travel many days and many nights to find his way back again. But at last he reached the palace. When he got there, he pulled the cork out of the gourd. By then the *pulque* smelled like the waters of death. He gave it to King Zotzil, who began drinking it at once. He drank and drank, and the *pulque* made him so silly that he forgot his ugly plans to steal the kingdom of the Aztecs. It made him so silly that he even forgot his plan to marry his daughter to the King of the Aztecs. Most astounding of all, it made him so silly that his wise men took his own kingdom away from him!

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In the meantime, the slave looked for Princess Three Butterflies. When he found her, he told her about the lost king, and what he had said.

"Can you love me, Little Three Butterflies?" asked the Mixtec slave.

And what do you think happened? Little Three Butterflies stopped crying and stopped sighing, and began to smile and be happy and pink-cheeked!

"But," she said, "how can we be married? I am a princess, and you are a slave."

The slave laughed.

"In my own country," he said, "I am a Mixtec prince. Marry me, and we shall go there, and you will have a kingdom to reign over."

So they were married, but they did not go to the prince's kingdom, because the wise men of King Zotzil came and asked them to stay and rule over Three Butterflies' own kingdom!

"You see," said Grandfather Juan, smiling at Little Paco, "how a brave slave won his freedom and a kingdom by being wise and by keeping his word. If he had broken his promise and run away, he would have been just a hunted slave; but he kept his word and came back and found love. And you can see how greediness hurts people, because King Zotzil was greedy first for another king's kingdom, and

THE GREEN SERPENTS

later for the *pulque*—and his greediness ruined him, for he lost everything he had : his kingdom, his daughter, and his head, all because his head turned into a balloon, and he couldn't tell where his feet were."

"I think he would have eaten too much Christmas cake and had a tummy-ache if he had been here to-night," said Little Paco sleepily.





THE QUEEN AND THE GIANT

Little Paco and his Grandfather Juan were going for a “day-in-the-country” party. We would call it a picnic.

At eight o'clock every one was ready at the house of Paco's friend Salvador. Salvador's father had burros enough for all of the guests. Grandfather Juan lifted Little Paco up on top of a gray burro, and

THE QUEEN AND THE GIANT

Little Paco took hold of the rope reins to guide it. He kicked his little bare heels into the burro's sides, and yelled "*Ah-rrrr-eh!*" His small heels didn't hurt the burro at all, but the patient little animal knew by the commotion on his back that his rider was ready to start.

When all of the older guests were mounted, the burros began to move. Soon they were out in the country. How fine it was under the blue sky, with the sun so bright and the fields so green and the air so pure! Every one was laughing and talking, and the burros were trotting along contentedly.

After a while they came to the edge of a great cañon, and they began to descend to the valley below by way of a little, narrow path. The burros went one by one, feeling their way carefully. How exciting it was! On one side was the high cañon wall, covered with banana trees and ferns and wild figs; on the other side, way down below, was the Santiago River!

Little Paco held tight to his burro. He knew that if he let it have its own way he would be perfectly safe.

At the very bottom of the cañon they came to the big house of another friend. They would have the picnic here, beside the river. All of the guests dismounted and stretched their legs. Some of them began to play games and some went walking along the banks of the river. Little Paco climbed up a guava tree and ate guavas. When he came down, he went in swimming with Salvador. How they enjoyed the cool water!

AN AZTEC STORY BOOK

After their swim, they were called to lunch. Under the trees was a big table, loaded with all kinds of good food : hot *tacos* and Spanish rice and pork meat cooked with green pepper sauce, and hot, sweet *tamales* with raisins and almonds in them, and hot pineapple and corn gruel to drink. The birds were singing overhead and every one was happy and smiling.

After lunch the older people rested under the trees; the younger ones danced in the big corridor of the *hacienda* house to music made by a guitar and a violin and a harmonica.

During the rest of the afternoon they played more games, and talked together, and went on walks into the country. At last, though, it was time to go home. They got on their burros and soon were climbing up the rocky trail.

When they reached the very top of the cañon and were traveling over the wide fields back to town, one of the boys hit his burro quite hard with a thorny branch. Grandfather Juan scolded the boy, and told him he should not be so cruel.

"But the burro is bigger and stronger than I am," replied the boy.

"Yes, that is true," answered Grandfather Juan, "but you have more intelligence than he has, so you should be more kind, as Queen Coyoli was to the giant."

"Oh, Grandfather Juan!" cried Little Paco, "please tell about Queen Coyoli and the giant."

Grandfather Juan smiled.

THE QUEEN AND THE GIANT

"All right," he said, and he got off from his own burro so that he could walk beside Little Paco's burro, and this was the story he told, as they went home under the blossoming stars.

Long ago and long ago, when there were many wonderful things in our dear Mexico, there lived a race of giants. Of all the giants, the largest and fiercest was Big One. He was so tall that he could stand at the bottom of a deep cañon, and in three jumps be at the top. He was so big that he could step right over forests and rivers. He was so strong that he could lift the greatest and heaviest of stones. He could follow scents like a dog, and when he ran, his legs moved so fast that he seemed to be flying. When he was angry, lightning flashed from his eyes.

Big One was indeed a very terrible giant. Every one was afraid of him. He would take a whole cow and eat it in three bites. Even the tigers and lions were afraid of him, and hid in the ravines when he walked through the fields and over the forests. But the eagles loved him, because, whenever the leg of a cow was too tough for him, he would throw it to the eagles that flew around his head.

One night when Big One was asleep, he suddenly felt a stinging pain. He woke up and saw a rattlesnake curled on his chest. He jumped up and killed the snake as if it were a worm. But he knew he was full of poison where the rattlesnake had bit him, and perhaps would die if he did not hurry to the river that ran near the palace of the queen

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of the Zapotecs, in order to put on his wound some of the weeds growing there, that were known to be a cure for snakebite.

Big One at once began running toward the river that ran near the queen's palace. At first he ran like summer lightning, and little trees were bent and broken under his great feet. Then he ran like a tiger, and the wild animals scattered out of his way. Then he ran like a wild deer, and the birds flew chirping into the trees. Then he ran like a tired dog, and the monkeys laughed at him. He ran all day and all night, and just at dawn the next day he reached the place where the wild weeds grew that were a cure for snakebite; but by then he was not running at all—he was crawling like a poor, hurt animal. He crawled right up to the weeds, and picked some of them, and put them on the place where the snake had bitten him; but he was so tired that he could not rub the weeds into the wound. So he fell over on his back and lay beside the river in a swoon.

Now it happened that the queen was walking in her garden.

Queen Coyoli, the queen of the Zapotecs, was the sister of the king of the Aztecs, who had at one time fought the Zapotecs in a war that lasted for many years. But the year before this story begins, the Zapotecs and the Aztecs had made peace, and the Aztec king had given his sister, Coyoli, to the king of the Zapotecs to be his wife. Coyoli and the king of the Zapotecs had learned to love each other very dearly.

Two days before the snake had stung Big One, the king of the Aztecs sent twenty ambassadors to see the king of the Zapotecs, to

THE QUEEN AND THE GIANT

assure him of his good will and his peaceful intentions. But the ambassadors secretly asked Coyoli to poison her husband, the king of the Zapotecs, and give his kingdom to her brother. She had told them to go back to her wicked brother and tell him that she loved her husband dearly and would do him no harm.

Poor Queen Coyoli was very tired after hearing the twenty ambassadors, and she was walking in her beautiful garden with her maids, when she heard a dreadful groaning. She ran to see what it could be, and there, near the river that ran through her garden, she saw the giant Big One, groaning with pain. All of her maids shrieked and ran away, but Queen Coyoli ran to him, to see if she could be of any help. She saw the wound in his chest, and the weeds lying on it, and she recognized that they were the weeds which would cure snakebite. She was not a bit afraid of the giant; she saw that he was in pain, and she wanted to help him. So she began to rub the weeds on the wound.

After a while Big One stopped groaning. Queen Coyoli kept on rubbing the weed on the bite, saying to him in her sweet voice, "There, there, poor giant, it will be well soon!"

When Big One opened his eyes, he heard a sweet voice and saw the beautiful queen rubbing the weed on the bloody wound. He was like a poor, injured animal, grateful beyond words that some one was willing to be kind and helpful. He could not thank her, except with his eyes, but they looked at her devotedly.

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Queen Coyoli called her servants and told them to take him to a soft couch, and to call doctors, and to feed him, and to take the best of care of him.

When the king knew that Big One was lying helpless in the palace, he thought he would have him chained up tight, so that he could never be able to frighten the people and steal their cows any more. But the queen said that poor Big One was sick, and asked that he be left alone in peace.

So the king left him in peace, but when he was well, he was told that he had to fight five of the bravest warriors in the kingdom. If he defeated them all, he could go home; if he did not, he had to stay and be chained up in the palace.

They gave the five brave warriors all of the fighting spears and lances they desired, but to Big One they gave only a little stick. However, in no time at all he knocked the five warriors down! Then he spoke to the king of the Zapotecs.

"Please, I do not want to be free," he said. "I want to stay with you and serve you." Because really, you see, he was devoted to the kind little queen and he wanted to be near her.

But the king and his wise men were afraid of such a big fellow, and they made him wear chains.

Now the time had come for the ambassadors from the court of the king of the Aztecs to go away. For two days after they left, the door to the queen's room was locked, and every one thought she was

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crying because she wanted to go with them to see her brother. At last they were worried and forced their way into her room. She was not there! The king asked all of the servants if any of them knew what had happened, and soon found one who said that the twenty ambassadors from the court of the king of the Aztecs had carried off Queen Coyoli, who didn't want to go at all, but cried and cried!

Then the king rushed to Big One. He forgot that he had always feared him.

"Run!" he cried. "Run fast! Bring my dear little queen back to me! They have been gone only two days, and if you run fast enough you will catch them!"

Then Big One shook his great arms and legs, and the chains fell away from them. He looked about him and sniffed the air the way a dog does. Then he began running. He ran like a tiger, and like the wind, and like the lightning that flashes through the air at night. He crossed great rivers, and thought they were little streams; he went over great mountains, and thought they were heaps of sand. He ran and ran—right into the camp of the ambassadors of the Aztec king, right to the tent in which the Queen was asleep. Big One snatched her up, all wrapped in beautiful white skins, and began running back with her!

The little queen woke up, and thought a big wind was carrying her off. She was so frightened that she fainted. But Big One took her with the speed of the wind over forests and mountains and rivers

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back to her dear husband, the king of the Zapotecs, carrying her as sweetly and gently as though she were the tiniest of babies.

After that the king of the Zapotecs was never afraid of the giant Big One any more, but let him do whatever he wished. And what he liked to do most of all was to take the little queen riding in her gold and pearl coach, that he pulled along the roads with one of his fingers!

"So you see, dear Little Paco," said Grandfather Juan, "that no matter how big or ugly or fearsome an animal is, or a man, kindness and love and wisdom can always win his heart. Every one was afraid of Big One until a sweet queen with love in her heart tamed him and made him gentle and kind and faithful. So we should always remember Queen Coyoli, and be helpful and have nothing but love in our hearts for all men and animals."

Grandfather Juan smiled at Little Paco, who looked up at him happily. Salvador's father began to play the guitar and to sing, and soon every one joined in the song, that was sad-sounding and very sweet.



He ran back with the little queen.



THE MOON PRINCESS

Little Paco and his Grandfather Juan had been watching the Flower Parade.

It was the Sixteenth of September, which is Independence Day in Mexico. Instead of having fireworks and picnics on that day, the Mexicans have a parade and a battle of flowers. All of the people with automobiles had covered them with flowers, and there had been a big parade. Pretty girls in the floats had thrown flowers at the onlookers, many of whom in turn had thrown flowers at the pretty girls.

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There had been a great deal of confetti, too, and serpentines of red and white and green paper thrown down by people on roofs and balconies. The streets where the parade was held were full of the bright colors of the serpentines and the confetti and the flowers. In the park nearby the band was playing.

Little Paco loved the parade best of all. Some of the automobiles, covered over with white daisies, resembled swans; others were made to look like little houses, with people playing guitars inside; some were cages full of little red devils, and some were circus cars with clowns and bareback riders. Some were baskets of flowers, but the basket itself was made of flowers and the flowers were the pretty girls inside of the basket.

At eleven o'clock at night the governor had come out on the balcony of the palace, and had given the cry that was always called the "Grito de Dolores."

In every Mexican state at eleven o'clock of Independence Night the governor comes out on the balcony of the state legislative palace and gives this shout. It is done in memory of the patriot Hidalgo who first shouted "Liberty!" and rang the great bronze bells of freedom in the little town of Dolores, long ago. Because he shouted as he did, and because he had been working for the freedom of Mexico, the people of Mexico rose and freed themselves from their oppressive rulers.

When the governor gave the cry of freedom, pistol and rifle

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salvos were fired into the air, and rockets were shot up into the sky, and church bells rang for a long time!

The celebration was almost over when Little Paco and Grandfather Juan went home. There they found a midnight supper on the stove for them. Little Paco's mother wanted to see the crowds down town for a little while, so she asked Little Paco to watch the beans that were cooking.

"Watch them very carefully, Little Paco," she said, "and don't let them burn. Keep your eyes open better than the lady in the moon did!"

"I shall, Mother," said Little Paco. He and his Grandfather Juan sat near the little charcoal stove where the beans were cooking in a big pot. Every now and then Little Paco would fan the fire with a large palm-leaf fan to make it burn brighter.

"What did Mother mean by what she said about the lady in the moon?" he asked.

"Oh, that is a long story!" replied Grandfather Juan.

Little Paco moved his chair a little closer to his Grandfather Juan's.

"Will you tell it to me, Grandfather?" he asked.

"Yes, indeed!" said Grandfather Juan. "Here it is, dear Little Paco."

While Little Paco, far away in Mexico, fanned the fire and watched the beans, Grandfather Juan told him this story:

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Long ago and long ago, when the world was new, there was a beautiful princess who lived in the moon.

During the day she had nothing to do but sleep, and all night she could play and enjoy herself as much as she wished. She had only one duty: to watch carefully to be sure that the moon gave just the right light.

In those days, you see, people always planted grain and vegetables and flowers when the moon was full, and cut their finger nails and their hair when it was a quarter moon, and when it was three-quarters full it was the time to start new fires in their temples. Every one knows that moonlight is good for other things, too! The world always looks its loveliest by moonlight, and young people in love like nothing so well as the kind silver light of the moon to watch over them while they whisper to each other their pledges of eternal devotion.

So the beautiful princess who lived in the moon had nothing to do but take care of the moonlight, and see that it was always just what was needed by the people below.

Now at that time there was a bright, brave prince with flashing eyes who lived in the sun.

It happened one day that the little moon was still in the sky when the sun rose; and the princess in the moon and the prince in the sun saw each other and fell in love! The people on earth said they never saw anything like the way the sun was shining that day. It was so bright and warm that the cornstalks all grew a foot taller, and the

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morning-glories grew twice as big as they had been, and the sunflowers almost broke from their stalks, stretching toward the delicious warmth!

The moon that night was the softest, silveriest moon you ever saw! Almost every one fell in love that night. The people all rushed out of doors and began planting their crops right away, everything seemed so perfectly right. Besides, the light of the moon was so clear and bright, that it was almost like day!

This went on for some time, and the people on earth had the finest crops they had ever had.

Then the princess in the moon had an idea. She began to make herself a new dress, a beautiful silver dress to wear the next time the moon and the sun might chance to be in the sky at the same time. She made it out of a little silver cloud, and she stitched it all full of fine little stitches with threads made of long silver moonbeams. Then she sewed twinkly silvery stars all over it. It was to be a most beautiful dress!

She sewed all day, but when night came, she had to take care of the light of the moon. The next day she sewed all day again, and the next night she took care of the light. The next day she sewed all day again—and the next night she was so tired that she fell asleep!

And the moon went out!

No one on the earth below knew what to think about such a dreadful happening. No one had ever seen the moon go out before. One minute it was there in the sky, shining as brightly as ever, and the next minute it was darker than the darkest night the world had ever seen!

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Then things on the earth began going topsy-turvy! All the crops that were planted in the light of the moon began to grow as fast as they could *into the ground*, instead of up toward the sky! All of the sweet-hearts began to quarrel with one another! All of the owls and bats went to sleep! Everything went to sleep, because no one knew what else to do! Fires went out, pots boiled over, cats went to sleep, the earth itself went to sleep! Even the dogs that had been howling at the moon went to sleep, for they had nothing to howl at! And all because the light of the moon had gone out.

When the princess in the moon woke up, she yawned and stretched herself and put on her beautiful new dress. Then she saw that the light of the moon was out! She hurried to start the light again, but it was too late! Teotl, who looks after the sun and the moon and the stars, had angrily sent a little bent man, who was very old and didn't need much sleep, to look after the light of the moon.

"You will have to take a long nap now," Teotl said to the beautiful princess, "to punish you for going to sleep when you had work to do. You will have to sleep now for ten thousand years."

So the beautiful princess came down from the sky, weeping as she came because she thought she would never see the prince in the sun again. Every time a tear fell from her eyes, a beautiful violet sprang up, the color of the summer sky by moonlight.

She came to the shores of Lake Tezcucó, and there she found a lovely grassy place on which to rest. She was so sleepy that she just



The next night she was so tired that she fell asleep.

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had time to lie down before her eyes closed and she fell fast asleep for ten thousand years.

You can see her to this very day, high on the plateau above Mexico City. All Mexicans call her the Woman in White. You can see her face, and her breast, and her long body, as she lies there peacefully sleeping. But she has been sleeping for so many hundreds of years now that snow covers the beautiful dress she made of silvery moonbeams to wear for the prince of the sun.

Near her is a great mountain from which smoke is always pouring. It is the prince of the sun, who came down to the earth to watch over her during her long sleep. He built a watch fire, and there he sits, guarding the beautiful sleeping princess, the Woman in White, for the ten thousand years of her slumber. And her name is Iztacihuatl (Eez-tahs-see-waht-l), and his name is Popocatepetl (Poh-poh-caht-eh-pet-l).

"Why, Grandfather!" said Little Paco. "I have seen their pictures in my books!"

"Yes," said Grandfather Juan, "they are two very beautiful mountains."

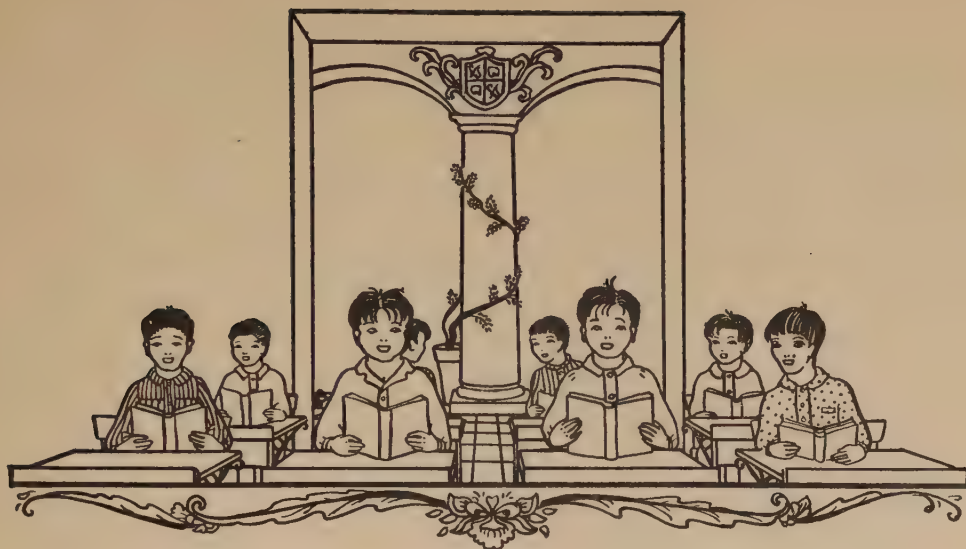
"Well," said Little Paco, rubbing his sleepy eyes, "I shall fan the beans and watch them hard, because I don't want to fall asleep like the princess in the moon!"

"That is right, Little Paco," said Grandfather Juan. "Just remem-

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ber that whatever you are supposed to do deserves all your attention."

Just then Little Paco's mother came in. She gave Little Paco a big hug and a kiss and said, "Goodness! How late it is! And how well you have watched the beans, Little Paco! They haven't boiled over and they haven't burned. Thank you so much! You and Grandfather Juan must eat your supper now and go to bed right away!"



THE EAGLE AND THE SNAKE

School had begun.

Little Paco did not like to go to school. In the schoolroom he had to sit at his desk for a long time, in one little chair. He had to write on his slate. He had to read his reading lesson, with all the other little boys, in a loud singsong voice.

“Grandfather,” said Little Paco, when he came home at the end of the first day, “why do I have to go to school?”

“What are you going to be when you grow up, Little Paco?” asked Grandfather Juan, who was stitching fine little stitches on a baby’s shoe of soft white leather.

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Little Paco came close to the big leather armchair in which his grandfather was sitting.

"I think I shall be a shoemaker, like you and like papa," he replied.

"And how will you keep your accounts and send your bills, Little Paco, if you can't read and write?"

"Well, my sister could do that for me."

"But how will you read the paper, to know what the price of leather is? How will you read the magazines that come, to know what kind of heels the ladies will want? And suppose your sister gets married? Suppose she does not live with you?"

"Well, I suppose I shall have to learn to read," said Little Paco. "But may I stop going to school after I learn how to read, and just play until I am big enough to make shoes?"

Grandfather Juan laughed.

"It is nice to play," he said. "We shall play a game of checkers this very evening, Little Paco. If you win I shall tell you the story of the impatient Aztecs, who were like you, and didn't want to do some of the hard things they were supposed to do."

"All right, Grandfather!" said Little Paco. "I'll do my best to win!"

That evening, after they had their supper of hot fried beans and cheese and corn *tortillas* and chocolate and sweet bread with sugar on top of it, Grandfather Juan and Little Paco played a game of

THE EAGLE AND THE SNAKE

checkers. Little Paco won! So they went out into the cool evening air and sat on the doorstep where they could see the stars and the sweet curve of the moon. And this is the story Grandfather Juan told.

Long ago and long ago, when Mexico was young, the Aztecs were not as great a tribe as they became later. People in those days were harsh and cruel. They knew little of love or kindness. The Aztec chief was very wise, yet all he knew of qualities of the spirit was that it was necessary for his people to be brave. For without bravery and strength, they would never be able to stand the struggle for life that every one faced at that time.

One night the Aztec chief dreamed a dream in which he learned that his people should go to a place where an eagle on a clump of cactus would be strangling a snake, and at that place they should build a great city.

The chief called his people together and told them they would have to travel to the place of his dream, even if it took many years.

So all of the Aztecs packed their goods and began to travel. They went south, and south, and south, and still they traveled.

They came to a beautiful lake which they named Chapala, and there many of them wanted to stay. They built little houses by the side of the lake. They made little clay toys and threw them into the lake, because they said the spirit of the lake was a little child, and when it was angry and cried the lake was rough, but when it was happy and

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smiling the lake was smooth, and then they could catch many fish. Even to this very day, after a storm, you can often find on the shores of Lake Chapala some of the toys the Aztecs threw to appease the spirit of the lake.

After they had been there three hundred years, one of the wise men of the Aztecs was walking in the woods and he heard a little bird singing. It said that they must keep going until they came to the place where the eagle was on a cactus, strangling a snake.

"But we like it here!" the wise man said to the bird.

But the little bird was firm.

"To-morrow," it said, "when half of the people are bathing in the lake, the other half must take their clothes away from them and pack up all of their goods, and go away. They must look for the eagle strangling the snake, and there they must build a great city. When those who are bathing come out of the water and find their clothes gone, they will have to stay at Chapala. But they will be happy."

The next day the wise men spoke to all of the people who were not bathing in the lake. They told them what the bird had said. So they gathered their belongings together and took the bathers' clothes, and moved away, traveling south. When the bathers came out of the lake, they found their clothes gone; so they had to stay there at Chapala.

The others traveled on and on. After a long time they came to another beautiful lake, which they named Tezcucó. There another wise man heard some frogs talking, and they said that the people

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should build rafts of straw and reeds and branches and float on the lake.

So the wise man told the people, and they built rafts and floated out on the lake. The dust blew on their rafts, and on the winds with the dust came little seeds, and the rains came, and made the seeds sprout; so that after a while the rafts of the Aztecs were beautiful floating gardens.

Three years went by, and the people began to be discontented. They wanted to stop floating around, they wanted to stop eating raw fish; they wanted to have homes on the land.

"Can't we stop now?" they asked. "We have never seen an eagle strangling a snake, and probably never will. Let us begin building our city to-morrow!"

"No," answered the wise men. "Let us still be patient, and do what the good spirits that watch over us say we must do."

"But we are very tired of this life!" they said.

And the wise men replied:

"That may be so. But you are growing strong and brave, and you are learning to live as the fish and the birds do; and the good spirits have sent you beautiful floating gardens to live in. Wait a little longer!"

The next morning they were floating over blue Lake Tezcuco, when they came to a little island behind which the sun was rising. At that moment a great eagle flew down out of the skies, and stood, with his wings spread, on top of a clump of cactus in the center of the

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island! He stood there majestically, with the rising sun behind him! Suddenly he bent forward and picked up a great snake with his sharp beak and one claw and began to strangle it!

"The sign! The sign!" shouted all of the people.

One of the wise men leaped from his floating garden to the edge of the island; but it gave way and he sank down and down. He went down through green water and black earth until he came to a palace under the lake. There he found Tlaloc, the spirit of Lake Tezcucó. He asked Tlaloc for permission to build a great city on the lake; and when Tlaloc granted that permission, he started back to his people.

The Aztecs were already making their floating gardens fast to the rock. They built houses on the island, and their floating gardens made it much larger, so that in a few years they had a great city there. And they were so strong and so brave that none of the wild Indians that lived near there ever bothered them. Thus they were able to make their city grow larger and more beautiful. Where that city once stood, the City of Mexico now stands.

Ever since then, the Mexican flag has been red and white and green: red for strong, brave blood; white for faith; and green for hope, that is always new like the little green plants in the springtime. In the middle of the white part of the flag is a cactus, and on the cactus is a great eagle with wings outspread, strangling a snake. Behind the eagle is the rising sun.

The snake, it is said, signifies any fear or any doubt that may come



He asked for permission to build a city.

THE EAGLE AND THE SNAKE

into one's heart; and the eagle stands for courage and strength to strangle such thoughts always.

Little Paco put his small hand into Grandfather Juan's big one.

"So you see, Little Paco," his grandfather was saying, "every one has to go to school. Even the Aztecs, all the time they were looking for the eagle, were really going to school—although they didn't call it that. But they were learning to be brave and strong, so that they could build a wonderful city when finally they found the right place.

"So it must be with you, Little Paco. You must go to school to learn to be wise and kind, so that you can build a city of love among the people with whom you live. When you are a man, every one will love and respect you, for they will know that you are both wise and kind."

In the dark, sweet Mexican night, Grandfather Juan smiled at Little Paco, who had walked over to a cactus plant in the *patio* and was feeling its spines with his thumb.



PRINCE BRAVE HEART

Little Paco was cleaning up the house for a party. His mother and his brothers and sisters were busy making all kinds of good things to eat, and his father was busy making shoes to help pay for the party.

He gave the two canaries and the parrot Perico fresh drinking water, and he put nice, clean paper in the bottom of their cages. Then he gave them new birdseed and lettuce. He bathed Chuchu, the dog, and Tonch, the cat. Then he put a new blue ribbon on Tonch's neck. He helped scrub the floors, and when he had finished, the bright red tiles shone like looking glasses.

PRINCE BRAVE HEART

It was going to be a fine party!

When his work was all done, Little Paco went out into the *patio* and sat down beside his Grandfather Juan.

"I'm so weary, Grandfather!" he said. "My arms and legs are so tired!"

Grandfather Juan was mending a lady's slipper. He put a little piece of leather on the heel and began to tack it with teeny-weeny tacks.

"It's too bad parties are such hard work!" sighed Little Paco. "I wish we could have parties without ever doing anything to get ready. My back is awfully tired from scrubbing the floor, Grandfather."

Grandfather Juan looked over his glasses at Little Paco.

"You haven't been standing over a hot fire all day stirring milk custard candy," he said. He knew that Little Paco's sister Maria had been stirring and stirring milk custard candy all day long, just because it was Little Paco's favorite candy.

"No," said Little Paco.

"You haven't been washing and ironing white curtains for the windows all day," said Grandfather Juan. Little Paco's sister Luz had made every curtain in their little house as sweet and clean as could be.

"No, I haven't," replied Little Paco.

"You haven't been sewing and nailing shoes all day."

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"That's right," answered Little Paco.

"But what you did do, you did very well," said Grandfather Juan. "Look at the red tiles, how shining and clean they are! Aren't you proud of your work, Little Paco?"

"Yes," said Little Paco.

"Aren't you glad that you did it?"

"Yes."

"Then you should be like our good Prince Brave Heart, and not grumble!" said Grandfather Juan. And he tapped all around the edge of the heel he was working on.

"Oh, Grandfather!" cried Little Paco. "Tell me about Prince Brave Heart!"

Grandfather Juan looked over his glasses again and smiled.

"All right, dear Little Paco," he said. "You have earned a story."

And this is the story Grandfather Juan told Little Paco, as they sat in their *patio* in far-away Mexico.

Long ago and long ago, people were not always kind and good to one another. Sometimes they did very wicked things. This is the story of some men who did a very wicked thing to another man, but he was so brave that in the end he won over them all, and now every one remembers his name with love, but no one even cares to remember the other men.

In the beginning there were only Indians in Mexico. Later, con-

PRINCE BRAVE HEART

querors from over the seas came, and they took Mexico away from the Indians, and made the Indians their servants.

With those conquerors came a little sewing girl named Mencía.

Mencía was only fifteen years old, but she could embroider so well that when the captain of the conquerors saw what she could do, he wanted her to come with them.

"She must come with us, to embroider our flags!" he commanded.

So they took little Mencía with them on their big ship.

The captain of the conquerors soon grew very fond of Mencía, for she was a pretty girl, and always sweet and gentle and kind. But the captain was not a good man, and he treated his soldiers badly; and little Mencía, seeing how cruel he was, did not like him at all. Whenever he came near her, she looked down at the ground; she would curtsy and say "Yes, sir," or "No, sir," whenever he asked her a question, but she would say nothing else, because she didn't like to talk to such a man.

When the conquerors reached Mexico, they began to march through the country, fighting the poor Indians. Little Mencía saw the many cruel things the conquerors did, and she was very unhappy. She felt that the Indians should be treated kindly, for they had generously welcomed and cared for their visitors when they first reached the shores of Mexico.

But the conquerors were ruthless. They had heard stories of the treasures of gold and silver and precious stones the Indians had in

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Mexico City. So they marched straight on to take the treasures of the Indians away from them.

But when they reached there, they found that everything of value had vanished!

Then they were very angry. They held a meeting to decide what they should do.

"Let us capture two or three of these Indian princes," said one of their leaders, "and *make* them tell where their treasures are!"

So they caught Brave Heart and another prince. At first they just asked them what they had done with their gold and silver.

"Do you think we shall tell you?" answered Brave Heart. "You have destroyed, you have tortured, you have killed. You have taken from my people everything but their gold and silver and precious stones. Do you think now that we shall give you these?"

The conquerors were furious. They seized Brave Heart and the other prince and tied them to a stone bench.

"Tell us," they said to the Indian princes, "where your treasures are, and we shall do you no harm. But if you do not tell us, you will never be seen by your people again!"

Brave Heart laughed.

"No hurt you can give me would make me betray my people!" he said.

So the conquerors brought into the room two little clay stoves filled with hot coals. They took off the prince's sandals, and put one

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of the little stoves on the floor near his feet. Then they did the same thing to the other prince.

Again Brave Heart laughed.

"Burn me up if you wish," he said. "I shall never tell you. The things you want belong to my people, and not to you. You will never find out about them from me!"

The red-hot coals were moved a little closer to the feet of the two princes, and then a little closer still.

The second prince began to moan and cry.

"Oh!" he cried, "let us tell them! My feet are burning!"

Brave Heart looked at him.

"Do you think that I, then, am on a bed of roses?" he asked.

Then the other prince was ashamed of his momentary lack of courage, and he closed his lips tight. Although the coals were burning the soles of their feet, neither of the two princes made another sound.

When the conquerors saw how brave the Indian princes were, their hearts were touched, and they were filled with remorse.

"They are too brave to be killed," said their captain. "Let them go!"

Now it happened that just at that time, out in the street in front of the palace, little Mencía met a soldier who told her what was happening.

"Oh," she cried, "how shameful!" And she rushed into the palace, pushing away the guards who tried to stop her.

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Inside the palace they had just finished untying the ropes that bound the princes, when little Mencía burst into the room.

"Cowards!" she cried. "You should be ashamed to torture these brave men!"

She didn't even look at the captain who loved her but whom she could never love because of his bad heart. She ran straight to Brave Heart, and threw herself on her knees beside him.

"Oh, dear Brave Heart!" she cried, "I love you! I love you because you are so fine and so good and so brave; I love you because you do what is right, no matter how they try to make you do wrong!" With her eyes full of tears, she threw her arms around his neck.

Prince Brave Heart looked deep into the tearful blue eyes of the little sewing girl and saw true love there. His own heart was touched with love, so he put his arms around her and kissed her. Together they walked out of that dark palace and into the warm Aztec sunlight.

"So you see, dear Little Paco," said Grandfather Juan, "that brave people do not complain. Brave Heart said nothing when he was suffering but 'Am I, then, on a bed of roses?' No one, Little Paco, has a bed of roses in this life. Every one works hard, and sometimes people suffer; but if you always do what you know is right, you will find true love waiting for you one of these days, as he did. And you must always remember that although a man may be of another race and color, he can have as brave and true a heart as any one."



Mencía threw herself on her knees.

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And Grandfather Juan smiled and looked over his glasses once more—this time at Little Paco's mother, who came out of the house just then with some lovely sweet cakes for Little Paco, and a big hug and a kiss to let him know that she loved him.



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Little Paco had fed Chuchu, his dog, and had given a bowl of milk to Tonch, the cat. He had scattered corn for the hens and the rooster. He had put lettuce leaves and seeds in the bird cages. He had watered the flowers in the four flowerpots of the *patio*. He had gone to the mill for ground corn meal, to make *tortillas*. Now he had nothing else to do, so he went into the house.

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"Is there anything else you want me to do, Mother?" he asked. His mother gave him a little hug.

"No, dearest Little Paco, there isn't," she said. "For helping me so much, you shall have an extra-fine supper to-night. I am going to make some delicious *tacos* from new *tortillas* made out of this fine ground corn meal you have brought me. And I shall make you pine-apple gruel to drink. But I want you to have a fine appetite, Little Paco. Wouldn't you like to take your kite out into the country? Grandfather Juan has been nailing heels on slippers all day; perhaps he will go with you."

"Will you, Grandfather?" asked Little Paco.

Grandfather Juan put down his little hammer.

"Indeed I shall," he said. "Bring your kite and we'll start."

Little Paco ran to his room and got out his kite, a most beautiful big one. It was made of orange-colored paper and it had a great long tail. Little Paco had made it himself, and was very proud of it.

He and Grandfather Juan walked and walked, until they came to a large field near the Country Club. Little Paco waved to some of his friends who were already flying their kites from that field, and soon his own kite was far up in the air.

On the Country Club grounds they could see boys and girls playing tennis and golf. But none of them were having as good a time as Little Paco and his barefooted little friends had out in the open field, flying the kites they had made with their very own hands!

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Their kites went up so high they could hardly see them; before the afternoon was over some of the kite strings got tangled together, and then there was excitement enough!

After a while the sun began to set. Out in the road, automobiles began to stop and park. The people in them had driven out from town to watch the sunset. When the great red and gold and pink and violet clouds became dark, after the golden sun had dropped behind the blue mountains, all of the cars, one by one, drove back to town again.

Little Paco and the other little boys had pulled in their kites before sunset, and had joined Grandfather Juan on a little grassy bank under a *mesquite* (mehs-kee-teh) tree to watch the changing sky.

"This particular sunset," said Grandfather Juan, "reminds me of the time Feathered Serpent left Mexico."

"Oh, Grandfather Juan!" cried all the little boys. "Will you tell us about Feathered Serpent?"

Grandfather Juan nodded his head and began. This is the story he told the little boys at sunset under the *mesquite* tree in far-away Mexico.

Long ago and long ago, there appeared among the people of Mexico a man called Feathered Serpent. He was called this because he was as wise as the serpent, and because he came from the sun, for in those days the people thought the rays of the sun were like golden feathers.

Feathered Serpent taught the people many useful things. He

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showed them how to make fine cottons grow—red, blue, green, and yellow cottons—so that they did not have to use dyes to color the goods they wove from them. He taught them how to make beautiful cloaks out of the feathers of bright-colored birds. Pumpkins grew big, and corn was plentiful, and there were gold and silver and precious stones for every one, as a result of Feathered Serpent's loving leadership. Birds of all colors filled the air, and made the day and night sweet with their songs. People worked joyously and lived together in peace and happiness.

But the Night Wind grew jealous of the man who came from the sun, and determined to drive him away. So one night when the clouds were scudding across the sky and all of the trees were bending and swaying before the coming storm, a web was spun down out of the dark heavens, a web at the end of which hung a great black spider. The spider was Night Wind, the wicked magician.

When he reached the earth, Night Wind changed himself into an old white-haired man. Then he went to the palace of the good Feathered Serpent, and asked to see him. But the servants said that Feathered Serpent was ill and could not see any one. Night Wind told them to go back and tell him that the best doctor in Mexico was waiting outside.

Soon the servants came back again and told Night Wind that he could go in. He went to Feathered Serpent and gave him a liquid to drink.

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"Here is a good medicine for you!" said Night Wind.

"I have known for many days that you would come," said Feathered Serpent, and he drank what Night Wind gave him. But it was *pulque* (pool-keh), and soon Feathered Serpent's head felt like a balloon and he could not manage his feet and he became foolish, so that Night Wind could do whatever he wanted with him!

Then Night Wind knew he must fool the chief prince. So he dressed himself like a poor seller of green peppers. He went in front of the prince's palace, and a princess saw him. He bewitched her and made her fall in love with him. She began to cry and to sigh, and became very ill, so that her father asked the women who waited on her what was the matter with his little daughter.

The women said that the princess was in love with a seller of green peppers.

The prince sent for the poor Indian.

"Who are you?" he asked when Night Wind came before him.

"A seller of green peppers," answered Night Wind.

"If I send you out of the country, my daughter will be unhappy," said the poor prince. "Go to her; marry her and make her happy."

So Night Wind, dressed as a poor Indian, married the daughter of the chief prince.

All of the people for miles around were invited to the wedding party. Every one came, rejoicing, and Night Wind fed them great dinners. Then he had them sing and dance. But he began to play a

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strange tune for them to dance to, and he made them dance faster and faster, until they were dancing so fast that it was impossible to tell whether they were human beings or not. And when Night Wind stopped playing, they had all changed into rocks!

Some time later the bad Night Wind appeared in the big public plaza at Tollan. He had a little child dancing on his hand. This was such a wonderful sight that all of the people of Tollan gathered around to see it. They crowded closer and closer, and then Night Wind turned *them* into rocks, too!

When Feathered Serpent saw what Night Wind was doing to the people everywhere, he became very sorrowful. He called his people together and told him that he was going back to the sun, because as long as he stayed he would bring them bad luck. He burned the houses he had built; he changed the cocoa trees into *mesquites* with big thorns; and he told his beautiful birds to follow him.

Then he began walking away. After he had walked a long distance, he came to a great tree. He rested under the tree for a long time. Then he asked to see himself in a mirror. He looked at himself and said, "I am getting old." That place has been called Old Feathered Serpent ever since. At another place he rested his hand on a stone, and the mark is there to this day.

After many days he came to the land of some wizards like Night Wind. They wanted him to show them the secrets he knew, such as how to make colored cotton grow, and how to work gold and silver,

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and how to make featherwork. But Feathered Serpent refused to tell them. As he left them he threw all of his jewels into a spring near-by. It is now called the Water of Precious Stones, for it shines with the colors of all the beautiful stones he threw into it.

At last the Feathered Serpent came to the ocean, and there the sun was shining on the sea. Feathered Serpent found waiting for him a long raft of golden serpents which took him away over the water to his home in the sun.

So Night Wind was left with the land, but the people were all turned into stones, and the fine trees into thorny *mesquites*, and the birds and the beautiful gems and the fine things were all gone. So for many years there was nothing there at all but the wicked Night Wind, rushing over the land and howling to himself!

But it is said that some day Feathered Serpent will come again from the sun, on his raft of golden serpents, to show people once more how to do many wonderful things, and how to live kind, and good, and happy lives.

“So you see, dear little boys,” said Grandfather Juan, “how necessary it is not to let evil thoughts stay in your minds. If Night Wind had not let himself think evil thoughts, he would not have been such an evil spirit. Just as he laid waste the whole country of Mexico, bad thoughts can lay our lives waste.”



A raft of gold serpents took him over the water.

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Grandfather Juan patted Little Paco's hand and smiled at all of the other little boys.

"But, come, my children," he said. "The sun has set and it is supper time; and at home all of your good mothers are waiting to give their little boys *enchiladas* to eat and hot *atole* to drink."

Grandfather Juan and all of the little kite flyers started toward town, through the lovely Mexican night. The night wind that was blowing on their faces was gentle and sweet, and the stars that blossomed in the sky were shining brightly with their message of love and hope. Little Paco had a warm bright feeling in his heart, and was glad that he was a little boy in beautiful Mexico with such a good grandfather as Grandfather Juan.



